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THE MOTOR VEHICLE PROBLEM

It is occasion for regret that the Commissioners of the District in their annual report have not seen fit to recommend some change in the law fixing a twelve-mile speed limit for automobiles in the city. The understanding is that the recommendation will be forthcoming later in special form, and that effort will be made to secure some modification of present bad conditions. If it is not initiated by the municipal administration then some friend of the District should introduce and press the legislation.

Last year the recommendation was made that the present iron-clad speed limit law be repealed and a general authorization conferred on the Commissioners to make regulations which should include the power to vary the speed limit on different streets, according to conditions. This is the kind of legislation that should be passed. There is more of danger than of safety in the present low speed limit. The real purpose of the greatest measure of security. Safe driving, not slow driving necessarily, should be the criterion, as it is becoming more and more generally in cities that handle the motor car problem most successfully. Washington, of all towns, ought to have administrative discretion vested in some proper authority, to adopt rules to real needs.

SCIENCE FOR THE CANAL

The appointment of a board of commission of scientists, especially geologists, to study conditions in the Gaillard cut on the Panama canal, is a move perfectly proper now, but that should have been made long ago. President Wilson has taken a step for which the need was plainly pointed repeatedly during the last Administration. There was scientific and engineering opinion, in such volume and of such character as to make it more than merely respectable, to the effect that a wrong policy was being pursued; that the geologic formation was such that a simple, straightaway cut would not be safe. Now there is complete proof that this view was correct. It is a serious reflection on the management of the canal task that attention was not given earlier to the warnings of men competent to sound them.

Some recent advices from the Zone have expressed opinion that it will be several years before the canal can be opened with any certainty of permanence. It might about as well not be opened at all, for every time there is a resumption of traffic followed by another suspension, confidence in the permanence and security of the route is reduced. The shipping world cannot take chances; will not take them many times.

PRACTICAL PRISON REFORM

Thomas Mott Osborne, warden of Sing Sing prison, speaking before the women's department of the National Civic Federation, made a straightforward and convincing explanation of the policies he has advocated in his work at Sing Sing and Auburn.

Mr. Osborne's plea for the indeterminate sentence is along the line of present day thinking by students of penal reform who are not at all radical. The whole revolution in our method of treating prisoners is brought about by the clearer realization of what prisons are for. They are not, to the minds of modern students, places where society wreaks a harrowing vengeance upon those who have violated its canons. They are not places for the incarceration of an abnormal class of society. The persons in them are not defective and they are not abnormal, for the most part.

To Mr. Osborne the prison is a sort of psychic hospital, whence men may come forth "desirous and capable of becoming useful citizens." There is no effort to mitigate the punishment feature. As Mr. Osborne happily points out, the loss of a man's liberty is the essential feature of the punishment, and his own home would become an effective penal institution were he to be incarcerated there, even with all the comforts to which he has been accustomed.

Mr. Osborne is not alone in believing the halting walk, the furtive glances, and the stooped shoulders of the man who comes out of prison is the stamp of the prison, not of the man. He is not in favor of pampering or coddling prisoners. He merely wishes to surround them with influences which will enable them to become good citizens after they have paid the sufficient debt to society of a loss of their liberty until they have assured that they can "make good."

publicity hunter, Mr. Osborne now is regarded more highly by his own State than he was six months ago, and his definition of his beliefs and aims, as given in Washington yesterday, stamp his theories as being in accord with the best modern thinking on the subject of prison methods.

THE ANCONA CASE AGAIN

The State Department will make public tomorrow, it is understood, the text of the note it has dispatched to Vienna concerning the Ancona case.

In this instance the United States finds itself with a two-fold grievance. Not only was the Ancona sunk under circumstances that cost American lives, and that violated every consideration of humanity, but the injury was compounded by the contemptuous attitude of the Vienna government in failing to answer American inquiries as to its view of the affair.

A month has elapsed since the Ancona was sent to the bottom of the Mediterranean. There was a complete agreement, as to all essentials, in the stories that crew, officers, and passengers told about the barbarity. The ship was attacked without warning; was shelled after she had stopped; continued to be shelled while her lifeboats were being put over the sides with the ship's company. Many of the lives lost were sacrificed by this firing; it was testified that the submarine circled round and round the ship, firing all the time.

When the earliest inquiries were made by the American Government, Vienna issued a statement from its naval authorities, saying the ship tried to escape, and was not shelled. This was in direct conflict with all other testimony. Being merely the statement of the navy, however, Washington wanted it supplemented and made official and diplomatic by a statement from the Vienna foreign office, and for this the State Department has pressed ever since. The foreign office explanation has not been forthcoming despite all insistence.

There seems only one explanation of this delay. If the early assurance from the Austrian naval authorities was correct, then there is no reason why the foreign office should delay giving the diplomatic answer to our diplomatic inquiry. If the naval explanation was not correct, then Austria is convicted of direct misrepresentation. In the beginning the navy officers were able to make the positive statement that the ship was not shelled, and that she tried to escape. Now they say that they cannot answer our State Department, because they have not been able to communicate with the commander of the submarine.

The two declarations are utterly inconsistent with any presumption of sincerity at Vienna. They suggest that the Austrian government is playing horse with Washington, as Berlin has done for many months in regard to its submarine policy and acts. Apparently there is a definite understanding between Berlin and Vienna that they will give the United States no satisfaction, but will stick together in defying it and prosecuting the submarine warfare as they please. They know very well that aside from the United States they have no need to fear the displeasure of any neutral; and apparently they are growing more and more confident that they need not fear the United States, either. Courtesy gets shorter and shorter shrift in the successive developments of the Teutonic attitude toward the United States.

We are assured that the latest note to Austria is couched in more vigorous language than has yet been employed by the Washington Government since this series of controversies began. It is hard to understand how it could be more vigorous than the Lusitania note, which insisted on complete accountability; and even if language should be found to strengthen that statement there would still have to be misgivings as to whether any kind of language, used by our Government, could make an impression on the Germanic crust. It looks as if something more effective than any sort of language would have to be employed if results shall be attained, and for such a development the time seemingly is not far ahead.

PORK IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Secretary McAdoo has done a useful service in analyzing the public building appropriations and entering protest against the high price of pork in them. There has always been room for discussion about the necessity for many of the items in river and harbor bills; a given improvement might be useful or might be a waste of money; sometimes the determination has been impossible until long after the expenditure was made.

But in the matter of public buildings it has been possible to be more certain. Buildings ill adapted to their purpose, expensive to administer, have been erected on sites vastly too expensive for legitimate needs. In small towns buildings have been wastefully big and pretentious; in cities they have been

frequently planned on such inadequate scale that before they could be completed the needs had already outgrown them.

There have been scandalous illustrations, too, of the waste that "pull" has involved in the selection of sites for public buildings. Sites have been chosen without reference to the needs or economics of the public service. This has been somewhat less the rule in recent years; but there is still altogether too much of it, as the McAdoo report shows. Not only in initial cost but in upkeep and in the expense of service, can great economies be effected by applying plain horse sense to the public building program.

GERMANY'S PEACE TERMS

Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg's talk on Germany's view of peace conditions, in the reichstag today, will be disappointing, it may fairly be expected, to a large section of the German nation. It will hardly disappoint anybody in other countries, because there has been no serious expectation that Germany would at this time admit willingness to concede anything in order to make peace.

The chancellor assumes, definitely enough to impress the German people at least, that Germany is definitely a conqueror and able to retain her position as such; therefore that she must make peace on her own terms. He still stands on the record of German military successes, and of course continues to justify Germany's part in the war on the outworn theory that Germany is the virtuous victim of conspiring enemies that must be punished before lasting peace can be effected.

No matter what the rest of the world thinks, Germany has been made by its rulers pretty sincerely to believe this notion about the British-born conspiracy to destroy Germany. If it doesn't believe it, it is at least determined to go in, definitely pretending to believe it. Thus there is on both sides the determination to "punish" the other; and while that attitude persists, while there is still blindness to the fact that all the belligerents have been frightfully punished already, the prospect for peace is poor.

It will be observed that in dealing with the questions of Belgium, Bosnia, a restoration of Serbia, Alsace and Lorraine, Poland, and Turkey's continuance in Europe, the chancellor deals rather in conundrums than in specifications. His tone is defiant, but he does not leave it impossible, with dignity and self-respect, for Germany to return to consideration of these proposals and negotiate with them among the basic considerations.

Manifestly the German government does not fancy the disposition throughout the country to insist on talking about possible peace. Referring to the great expectations among Germans, and the satisfaction in enemy countries, caused by the prospect of a peace discussion, he said it was to him incomprehensible that such a feeling should prevail, in view of Germany's success in the near East. This can only be a notice that Germany need not expect their government seriously to consider peace so long as it is victorious. The alternative to that—and it must be a gloomy one for the German people—is that only if and when Germany is definitely overmastered in power, will she be ready seriously to consider peace.

It is a dangerous gamble; but it is the one that could have been expected of the Prussian military party. There have been no overtures for peace from any enemy, the chancellor said; and his tone indicates that there will be none from Germany. It is not a cheerful outlook; yet on the other hand the mere fact that the question has been discussed at all in the reichstag, the fact that the discussion followed a long conference between Kaiser and chancellor, is suggestive of a possible brighter construction. Talk of peace, in any terms whatever, is better than talk of nothing whatever but continuing the war.

One way to insure prohibition is to allow anti-prohibitionists to vote on it in the morning.

We understand that those mutinous Chinese sailors turned yellow at the critical moment.

King Constantine's "passive resistance" must be something akin to "belligerent neutrality."

And Rhode Island is even losing her title as the Mother of Presidents' turkeys.

Sending Christmas gifts to his close relations is no fun to an equally close individual.

As the mountain didn't come to Mahomet, Senor Villa will go to the mountains.

Why not the Texan theory that the best defense is an attack?

Only twenty-three more shopping days until the water wagon.

Are we growing old and deaf, or is Haiti really quiet?

In England it's either scrap or be scrapped.

INDUSTRY TO SPEND FORTUNE ON PLANT

Firm Announces It Will Build At Once Additions Costing \$6,000,000.

NEW YORK, Dec. 9.—The Midvale Steel and Ordnance Company, the new Rockefeller Ordnance Company, which, according to reports, is equipped with big war contracts, has announced it had authorized additions and improvements to its plant which will cost upward of \$6,000,000, to take care of increased business.

Important additions to the machine shop equipment at the Midvale plant are included among the changes, which will give increased capacity so as to handle orders recently taken from the United States government for heavy ordnance, including 14 and 16-inch guns seventy feet long.

Confirmation of the recent report that the company had acquired all capital stock of the Buena Vista Iron Company, a concern owning extensive ore deposits in Cuba, was also made by the Rockefeller Ordnance Company. This property contains 300,000 tons of merchantable iron ore.

According to an announcement the Bethlehem Steel Corporation made last week, the average daily output was almost 3,000 tons of steel, and it is estimated that if this rate of production is maintained the Bethlehem Steel Corporation will turn out approximately 10,000 shells in the first ten months of next year.

At a net profit of \$5 a shell it is estimated that the corporation will earn \$500,000 on shells alone in the first ten months of next year. The result of reduced costs in manufacture may make the earnings per shell greatly in excess of \$5.

Earnings from other sources, including shipbuilding and steel rails, it is believed, should permit the Bethlehem Steel Corporation to realize a net profit of \$100,000 in 1916.

Rise of Ore Prices. Of iron and steel trade conditions, the Iron Trade Review will say:

"Announcement of the determination of next season's Lake Superior ore prices at an advance of 75 cents over the present level, has been met principally in a week that has witnessed the continued rise of iron and steel prices under the maintenance of a tremendous demand."

"The advance in Lake ore prices, which has been fixed by the closing of the season, is a further step in the general upward movement. The new prices are the highest since 1910 and have been exceeded only in three previous years."

"Forward pig iron values already have advanced to the higher cost, and as a growing scarcity of early metal deliveries is being experienced, further advances are being established in this product."

"From end to end, the iron and steel industry is thoroughly buoyant, and there seems to be no end to the prices that can be obtained where satisfactory deliveries can be made, so urgent is the general demand."

SOUTHWEST WANTS MORE PLAYGROUNDS

Citizens' Association Wants Congress to Grant It a Hearing on Question.

More playgrounds for the southwest section of the city were demanded at a meeting of the Southwest Washington Citizens' Association last night, and a resolution was adopted asking that the District Committee in the House and Senate give the executive committee of the association an opportunity to be heard in the matter.

B. F. Lindas, president, spoke at length on the necessity of some adequate playgrounds for the southwest section of the city. At present only the restricted playgrounds of a few schools are available, and the area is poorly equipped. The estimates recently submitted to Congress by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia for remedying this condition.

The association agreed to ask the District Commissioners to repave Seventeenth street from Pennsylvania avenue to the wharf. This is the only thorough street from the business section of the southwest to the city, and it is in bad condition.

A resolution was also passed calling attention to the fact that there has been no increase in the number of playgrounds in the southwest section in ten years, though the population has increased rapidly. It was agreed that at the next meeting the association would make the matter of uniting with the Federation of Citizens' Association would be taken up.

CAPITAL MEN ASKED TO G. O. P. FEAST

Committee Extends General Invitation to All Here—Noted Republicans to Attend.

A general invitation today was sent from the Washington headquarters of the Republican League to all business and professional men of Washington to attend the Republican banquet at the New Republic Hotel, December 13.

Speakers for the evening have not yet been announced, but among prominent Republicans who have accepted invitations to attend are Governors Brumbaugh of Pennsylvania, Hatfield of West Virginia, Whitman of New York, and others. The banquet will be held in the grand ballroom of the hotel, and will be a most enjoyable affair.

The committee will not address individual invitations to business and professional men here, but has asked those who will come to communicate with National Republican League headquarters, in the Riggs building.

Cornell Club Elects. Election of officers was the feature of the annual smoker of the Cornell Club last night at the University Club. The following were elected: Dr. E. Ames, president; Prof. L. C. Corbett, first vice president; W. C. Ballantyne, second vice president; E. H. McLaughlin, third vice president; and Ernest Kelley, secretary. Twenty-two members were present.

Federal Manufacture Of Munitions of War Faces Congress Fight

Attack on This Business Taking Two Lines, Government Control and Tax on Its Profits—Two Fundamental Opinions Appear As Forces in Congress Line Up For Bitter Battle.

By JUDSON C. WELLIVER.

Forces are lining up for a bitter fight in Congress on the question of Government manufacture, control, and monopoly of the business in munitions of war.

Last session, the foremost proposal of people who were shocked at the export of munitions was that it be prohibited. To this end various bills were introduced, none of which passed.

This session the same bills will be reintroduced, but the men back of them admit that they have less chance than ever of passing.

Instead, the attack on this business will take two forms. One is the demand for a tax on the business, or its profits.

The other is a demand that the Government take over, bag and baggage, the manufacture of guns—big and little—explosives, shells and the whole paraphernalia.

COMPARATIVE STRENGTH.

It is not possible as yet to determine which of these two propositions will muster the larger support. Government control of all munitions production undoubtedly has a considerable support in the middle West and South, where there is least enthusiasm about the preparedness program.

It also has backing among elements that would be glad to see the export of munitions prohibited entirely. The prediction has been made since Congress met, that when the showdown comes it will see every vote that last session could have been mustered in favor of prohibiting exports, for Government monopoly in this line.

This, however, is not all the strength that will be arrayed in favor of Government monopoly. There is a considerable element of members who would not have supported an embargo on exports, but who sincerely believe that Government monopoly represents the right method of perfecting our national preparedness. They believe safety lies in Government domination of this business.

Feature of Session.

This discussion is going to be one of the biggest features of the coming session. There are two fundamental opinions, as wide apart as the poles.

One element insists that private ownership is absolutely necessary in order to maintain in this country a large enough capacity to meet possible needs in case of a great war. It argues that private ownership, with the fullest measure of governmental encouragement, enabled both Germany and France to create the great establishments that, when the war broke out, were ready to supply their necessities.

The Krupp works were built up, during a long era of peace, as a private enterprise that sold war munitions all over the world. Germany was the best customer, it is true; but any country could come to Essen and get what it wanted. Spain bought there, to fight the Boers. Russia bought there, to fight the Japanese. And now Japan is turning out munitions and armaments for Russia to fight Germany.

World's Headquarters.

All around the world, wherever there was a market for the tools of war, the Krupp works have been on hand to sell. Even within the experience of the present war, the Krupp works have been the headquarters of German munitions destined to the Huerta forces in Mexico caused a disastrous international incident.

It is the nub of the whole matter. It is the principle of Government owning all the industries that must contribute to arming its forces when war comes, but the fact is that if the Government owns them they cannot possibly be developed into a business that will place them on a self-sustaining basis or anything like it.

Likewise, according to people who firmly believe in private ownership of these industries, there could not possibly be any such expansion of business under Government ownership.

Here's an illustration. A single illustration will indicate what a huge difference there is between public and private ownership. Suppose all the powder plants in the country had been publicly owned when the European war broke out. No foreign government could have bought a pound of powder here, because sales of powder by the Government would have been a violation of its neutrality.

In fact, the powder plants of this country were almost entirely privately owned. When the war broke out, they were not only ready to sell their output, but to increase their capacity at lightning speed and fill all orders. What happened?

The biggest explosive making concern in the country, at the beginning of the war, had a going capacity to produce about 10,000,000 pounds of war explosives in a year. Orders poured in upon it, and at the end of the first year of war this concern had actually increased its annual capacity to 300,000,000 pounds a year! Multiplying capacity by thirty was the accomplishment of this concern.

British Experience. Let this achievement be compared with what the British explosive manufacturers did. Soon after the war began Lord Kitchener called together the explosive makers of Great Britain, learned what they could do, and asked them to go away, consult, and return in a few days prepared to tell him how much they could expand their capacity in a year.

They went away, conferred, calculated, estimated, and came back to say that, if there were demands justifying it, they could raise their total capacity in a year, to 30,000,000 pounds per annum.

These figures are given on the highest authority of the explosive business in this country. It is believed that they can be taken as very accurate. In one year, fed by foreign orders and the incentive of profits, the capacity to make war explosives increased from 10,000,000 to 300,000,000 pounds. But if the business had been in Government hands, a Government monopoly, there would have been no foreign business at all, and the capacity would have been almost beyond belief; the burden to be carried in peace as well as war time.

Before the argument shall have gone very far in Congress, a good deal of amazing information will be given to the public. The last of Government manufacture has been attractive to no small number of people who talk about the public ownership of the munitions makers have accomplished, because there was possibility of quick returns, such an industrial mobilization as never was known in this country, and such a one as, in the belief of the real experts, could not possibly be duplicated under Government monopoly.

MAIL BAG

(From The Times' Readers.)
Communications to the Mail Bag must be written on one side of the paper only, must not exceed 250 words in length, and must be signed with name and address of sender. The publication of letters in The Times is not a guarantee of their truthfulness. The Mail Bag is an open forum, where the Mail Bag of Washington can argue most questions.

If It's a Glass Sign, You Might Get Another For It.
To the Editor of THE TIMES:
Is there no way that sign painters may be forced to spell things right? The latest is a pair of signs in a w. k. drug store on F street: "Begg Cocktail—very nourishing."

Let the War Go To a Finish.
To the Editor of THE TIMES:
The war should be stopped, if we can stop it and by so doing put an end to future wars. The boys should be taken out of the trenches if they or their boys are not put back in other and deeper trenches. The peace advocates of peace are any price, either do not, or do not want to realize that the war should not be stopped till such stoppage will stop wars.

The world cannot afford to end this war at this juncture even if it had the power. Neutral states could be obliged to prepare for war with the great powers of central Europe as none of the powers would be the object of attack by the common enemy of all. Among them might be the United States.

This war must be fought to a finish, or it is likely to be fought over again with added horrors. As future inventions will make the mortality rate greater and perhaps, the increased use of poisoned gases and like infernal inventions, the sufferings of the human race will be intense.

Washington, December 8.
W. A. FOSTER.

RUNS CAR AGAINST TREE, SAVING BOY

Taxicab Driver Swerves Automobile at Sharp Angle to Avert Accident.

While trying to avoid striking a small boy who had darted in front of his machine, Nevil W. Brown, of 423 Massachusetts avenue, northward, a taxicab driver, turned his machine at a sharp angle yesterday afternoon. The car struck a tree at Seventeenth street and Pennsylvania avenue, breaking the trunk.

A horse belonging to Joseph Witt, of 814 Four-and-a-half street, was killed yesterday as the result of a collision with a motor truck. The animal, while being driven along Virginia avenue southeast, became frightened at a locomotive, and, near South Capitol street and Virginia avenue ran into the truck, which was owned by L. P. Haw, of 111 E. street northward. The wheels of the vehicle passed over the horse, cutting off one of its feet. The animal was shot by a veterinarian.

Providence Hospital ambulance and an automobile owned by C. M. Blonbi, and operated by James Russ, of 1302 Sixth street southeast, collided yesterday afternoon at Sixth street and North Washington. Both were slightly damaged.

WHAT'S ON PROGRAM IN CAPITAL TODAY

Meetings of the Fraternal, Social, and Other Organizations in Washington.

Lecture, Mme. de Meisner, benefit of Russian relief fund, auditorium, Woodward & Lothrop's, 4 p. m.
Bazaar, Women's Guild of the Church of the Incarnation, 925 G street northwest, all day.
Bazaar, Columbia University Institute for the Blind, 1905 H street northwest, all day.
Address, Taking the Rich for Preparedness, Congress Hotel, 10th and Pennsylvania, 7:30 p. m.
Bazaar, First Congressional Church, all day and evening.
Election, Holy Name Society of St. Stephen's Roman Catholic Church, 10th and Pennsylvania, 7:30 p. m.
Rehearsal, Home Club Chorus, at Club, 7:45 p. m.
Masonic, The New Jerusalem, No. 9, Georgia C. Whiting, No. 2; Temple, No. 2; Masonic Veterans Association, William F. Hunt, No. 18; Eastern Star, No. 1, 8 p. m.
Odd Fellows—Salem, No. 2; Columbia, No. 10; Covenant, No. 18.
Knights of Pythias—Harmony, No. 21.
Royal Arcanum—Kismet Council.
Independent Order of Red Men—St. Louis Temple, 8 p. m.
National Union—Washington Council, Fraternal Club, 8 p. m.
Knights of Columbus—Keane Council.
Daughters of America—Progressive Council, 8 p. m.
Address, Mrs. W. H. A., 1530 Tenth street northwest, 8 p. m.
Entertainment for Congressmen by United Commercial Travelers, Pythian Temple, 8 p. m.
Address, "Spiritual Unfoldment," Mrs. Florence Willard, 1301 1/2 T. U. hall, 523 Sixth street northwest, 8 p. m.
Illustrated lecture, "The Grand Canyon of Arizona and the Indians of the Painted Desert," Dr. J. W. Williamson, National Press Club, 8 p. m.

Amusements.

New National—Watch Your Step, 8:15 p. m.
Belasco—David Warfield in "Van Der Decken," 8:15 p. m.
Follies—Edna and the 15 and 8:15 p. m.
B. F. Keith—Vaudeville, 2:15 and 8:15 p. m.
Casino—"A Little Girl in a Big City," 8:15 p. m.
Gaiety—Edna and the 15 and 8:15 p. m.

Police Here Search For Two Missing Men

Raymond Greathouse, twenty-one years old, th police have been informed, is missing from his home in Fort Myer Heights. Va. Greathouse's relatives say that he has not been well, and may be in a dazed condition.

A police lookout has been sent for Charles L. Spangler, employed at the navy yard, and whose address is given by the police as 1201 street southeast. His wife, the police say, declares that he has been missing since yesterday morning, and that a note received from him has alarmed her concerning his welfare.

Fortescue Lectures On Dardanelles Fighting

Capt. Granville Fortescue recently returned from several months with the Turkish army, delivered an illustrated lecture on the Dardanelles before the Metropolitan Club last night. Captain Fortescue described the British bombardment of Gallipoli and of the fighting in Asia Minor.

He will repeat his lecture before the National Geographic Society tomorrow night, and evening at the Masonic Temple auditorium.

One Year Ago Today in the War

Six German submarines unsuccessfully raided the admiralty harbor at Dover.

Germans captured Przasnysz in their drive on Warsaw from the north.

Germany, France and Russia discussed peace terms, but did not agree.

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